

vain! to alarm our jealousy of their conservative effects; we will cling to them as the granite pillars of our hope! *if they fail*, why, let the world go out!!

Mr. Speaker, I now dismiss the topic of Convention, which although it has an alliance to the question before the house. I might have underrated the importance of, but for the example of gentlemen on the other side who have preceded me.

Sir, I oppose the Bill upon your table by all the considerations which constrain us to a reformation of our criminal Laws. I invite for a moment, the attention of the House to this subject. Our laws punish with death the crime of murder, and the theft of a petty sum from a dwelling house. Atrocious crimes deserving the punishment of death, are punished with no greater severity than offences merely against public policy. The thief whose hunger prompted him to steal, is stretched on the bed of Procrustes, beside the murderer of his *own offspring*. Such injustice as this, is too revolting to the sentiments of a humane and christian community. It cannot be tolerated; for the effect will be to disarm the laws of all terrors to offenders, when they shall see that the severity of punishment operates the impunity of crime, through the misplaced mercy of the Jury or the interposition of Executive clemency. But, sir, there is another view of it. Those whose profession it is to note the calendar of crimes, will inform you, that as society becomes more civilized, crimes against the person are apt to diminish, because men become less barbarous and more refined in feeling,—while crimes against property are vastly multiplied, owing to the greater accumulation of property, and the increase of luxuries which tempt to them. Now, sir, can we resist the effects of causes which will place us in this situation? Can we shut out forever the light of civilization and the progress of luxury? No. Shall we go on to punish all crimes which grow out of the complicated rights of property with death? Is Justice a bloody Moloch, whom nothing but blood will appease? As christians can we do it, when we are taught to pray, “that our trespasses may be forgiven, as we forgive those who trespass against us?” Suppose, however, that you attempt it. Your laws can’t be executed. Blood for *property*, for *mere luxuries*, mercy never will brook!! Yet property must be protected! Men of property and the interests of society will unite in demanding, and will not be refused the necessary protection. It is therefore inevitable, that the time must come, when punishment must be better apportioned to offences. This can only be effected, by some system upon the plan of a Penitentiary. Where, sir, ought this House to be situated? Surely at your Seat of Government, under the eyes of the Legislature, and upon some navigable stream. Common sense will protest against its location in this City. The building would cost too much, from the immense expense attending the transportation of heavy materials. The raw material for the factories could not be procured here, but at an ever exhausting expense. When fabricated *here*, there would be no market to dispose of them. And no sooner the discovery is made, that the institution does not support itself; than